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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of :
Masaoka, et al. :
Application No. 10/605,843 : **DECISION**
Filed/Deposited: 30 October, 2003 :
Attorney Docket No. SIMTEK6701 :

This is a decision on the petition filed on 5 August, 2008, considered as a petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 (no fee) requesting withdrawal of the holding of abandonment in the above-identified application.

The petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 is **DISMISSED**.

Any request for reconsideration of this decision should be filed **within two (2) months** from the mail date of this decision. *Note* 37 C.F.R. §1.181(f). The request for reconsideration should include a cover letter and be entitled as a "Renewed Petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 to Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment."

This is **not** a final agency action within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. §704.

As to the Request to Withdraw
the Holding of Abandonment

A proper showing (for relief under 37 C.F.R. §1.181):

- (as to non-receipt) requires at the very minimum: a statement from practitioner stating that the Office action was not received by the practitioner; a statement from the practitioner attesting to the fact that a search of the file jacket and docket records for the application indicates that the Office action was not received with a copy of those docket records; and a brief statement of the calendaring process and a copy of the due-date (calendar) docket record(s) where the nonreceived Office action would have been scheduled for reply had it been received must be attached to and referenced in the practitioner's statement; alternatively,

- (for a showing of timely and proper reply) requires a statement from practitioner stating that the reply was timely submitted by the practitioner; and copies of all papers submitted as and/or in support of that reply, with/and a copy of the date-stamped receipt card, Office FAX receipt acknowledgement (not simply Petitioner's FAX transmittal), or EFS receipt acknowledgement from the Office, along with practitioner's attestation as to the correctness/completeness of his/her records.

The showing(s) must include that of the person(s) with first-hand knowledge and an acknowledgment by the Petitioner that he/she has reviewed that information in compliance with his/her duty of candor to the Office.

Petitioners' attentions always are drawn to the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c).¹

¹ The Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c) provides in pertinent part:

I. PETITION TO WITHDRAW HOLDING OF ABANDONMENT

A petition to revive an abandoned application (discussed below) should not be confused with a petition from an examiner's holding of abandonment. Where an applicant contends that the application is not in fact abandoned (e.g., there is disagreement as to the sufficiency of the reply, or as to controlling dates), a petition under 37 C.F.R. 1.181(a) requesting withdrawal of the holding of abandonment is the appropriate course of action, and such petition does not require a fee. Where there is no dispute as to whether an application is abandoned (e.g., the applicant's contentions merely involve the cause of abandonment), a petition under 37 C.F.R. 1.137 (accompanied by the appropriate petition fee) is necessary to revive the abandoned application.

Two additional procedures are available for reviving an application that has become abandoned due to a failure to reply to an Office Action: (1) a petition under 37 C.F.R. 1.137(a) based on unavoidable delay; and (2) a petition under 37 C.F.R. 1.137(b) based on unintentional delay.

A. Petition To Withdraw Holding of Abandonment Based on Failure To Receive Office Action

In *Delgar v. Schulyer*, 172 USPQ 513 (D.D.C. 1971), the court decided that the Office should mail a new Notice of Allowance in view of the evidence presented in support of the contention that the applicant's representative did not receive the original Notice of Allowance. Under the reasoning of *Delgar*, an allegation that an Office action was never received may be considered in a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment. If adequately supported, the Office may grant the petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment and remail the Office action. That is, the reasoning of *Delgar* is applicable regardless of whether an application is held abandoned for failure to timely pay the issue fee (35 U.S.C. 151) or for failure to prosecute (35 U.S.C. 133).

To minimize costs and burdens to practitioners and the Office, the Office has modified the showing required to establish nonreceipt of an Office action. The showing required to establish nonreceipt of an Office communication must include a statement from the practitioner ~~**>~~describing the system used for recording an Office action received at the correspondence address of record with the USPTO. The statement should establish that the docketing system is sufficiently reliable. It is expected that the record would include, but not be limited to, the application number, attorney docket number, the mail date of the Office action and the due date for the response.

Practitioner must state that the Office action was not received at the correspondence address of record, and that a search of the practitioner's record(s), including any file jacket or the equivalent, and the application contents, indicates that the Office action was not received. A copy of the record(s) used by the practitioner where the non-received Office action would have been entered had it been received is required.

A copy of the practitioner's record(s) required to show non-receipt of the Office action should include the master docket for the firm. That is, if a three month period for reply was set in the nonreceived Office action, a copy of the master docket report showing all replies docketed for a date three months from the mail date of the nonreceived Office action must be submitted as documentary proof of nonreceipt of the Office action. If no such master docket exists, the practitioner should so state and provide other evidence such as, but not limited to, the following: the application file jacket; incoming mail log; calendar; reminder system; or the individual docket record for the application in question.<

The showing outlined above may not be sufficient if there are circumstances that point to a conclusion that the Office action may have been lost after receipt rather than a conclusion that the Office action was lost in the mail (e.g., if the practitioner has a history of not receiving Office actions).

Evidence of nonreceipt of an Office communication or action (e.g., Notice of Abandonment or an advisory action) other than that action to which reply was required to avoid abandonment would not warrant withdrawal of the holding of abandonment. Abandonment takes place by operation of law for failure to reply to an Office action or timely pay the issue fee, not by operation of the mailing of a Notice of Abandonment. See *Lorenz*

Petitioner seeks to provide the documentation in compliance with the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(A) and/or (B) as it is set forth on the website (and included for reference herein).

BACKGROUND

The record reflects that:

The Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences (BPAI) mailed its decision in the instant matter on 21 May, 2008, affirming in part and reversing in part the rejections by the Examiner, and the BPAI provided that no extensions of time were available under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) in reply to the decision.

On 3 June, 2008, Petitioner filed a reply in the form of an amendment.

On 9 June, 2008, the Examiner mailed a Notice to the Petitioner indicating that the amendment was not entered and that, pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.198, Petitioner would have to file a request for

v. Finkl, 333 F.2d 885, 889-90, 142 USPQ 26, 29-30 (CCPA 1964); *Krahn v. Commissioner*, 15 USPQ2d 1823, 1824 (E.D. Va 1990); *In re Application of Fischer*, 6 USPQ2d 1573, 1574 (Comm'r Pat. 1988).

B. Petition To Withdraw Holding of Abandonment Based on Evidence That a Reply Was Timely Mailed or Filed

37 C.F.R. 1.10(c) through 1.10(e) and 1.10(g) set forth procedures for petitioning the Director of the USPTO to accord a filing date to correspondence as of the date of deposit of the correspondence as "Express Mail." A petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment relying upon a timely reply placed in "Express Mail" must include an appropriate petition under 37 C.F.R. 1.10(c), (d), (e), or (g) (see MPEP § 513). When a paper is shown to have been mailed to the Office using the "Express Mail" procedures, the paper must be entered in PALM with the "Express Mail" date.

Similarly, applicants may establish that a reply was filed with a postcard receipt that properly identifies the reply and provides *prima facie* evidence that the reply was timely filed. See MPEP § 503. For example, if the application has been held abandoned for failure to file a reply to a first Office action, and applicant has a postcard receipt showing that an amendment was timely filed in response to the Office action, then the holding of abandonment should be withdrawn upon the filing of a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment. When the reply is shown to have been timely filed based on a postcard receipt, the reply must be entered into PALM using the date of receipt of the reply as shown on the post card receipt.

Where a certificate of mailing under 37 C.F.R. 1.8, but not a postcard receipt, is relied upon in a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment, see 37 C.F.R. 1.8(b) and MPEP § 512. As stated in 37 C.F.R. 1.8(b)(3) the statement that attests to the previous timely mailing or transmission of the correspondence must be on a personal knowledge basis, or to the satisfaction of the Director of the USPTO. If the statement attesting to the previous timely mailing is not made by the person who signed the Certificate of Mailing (i.e., there is no personal knowledge basis), then the statement attesting to the previous timely mailing should include evidence that supports the conclusion that the correspondence was actually mailed (e.g., copies of a mailing log establishing that correspondence was mailed for that application). When the correspondence is shown to have been timely filed based on a certificate of mailing, the correspondence is entered into PALM with the actual date of receipt (i.e., the date that the duplicate copy of the papers was filed with the statement under 37 C.F.R. 1.8).

37 C.F.R. 1.8(b) also permits applicant to notify the Office of a previous mailing or transmission of correspondence and submit a statement under 37 C.F.R. 1.8(b)(3) accompanied by a duplicate copy of the correspondence when a reasonable amount of time (e.g., more than one month) has elapsed from the time of mailing or transmitting of the correspondence. Applicant does not have to wait until the application becomes abandoned before notifying the Office of the previous mailing or transmission of the correspondence. Applicant should check the private Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system for the status of the correspondence before notifying the Office. See MPEP §512.

C. Treatment of Untimely Petition To Withdraw Holding of Abandonment

37 C.F.R. 1.181(f) provides that, *inter alia*, except as otherwise provided, any petition not filed within 2 months from the action complained of may be dismissed as untimely. Therefore, any petition (under 37 C.F.R. 1.181) to withdraw the holding of abandonment not filed within 2 months of the mail date of a notice of abandonment (the action complained of) may be dismissed as untimely. 37 C.F.R. 1.181(f). Rather than dismiss an untimely petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment under 37 C.F.R. 1.181(f), the Office may require a terminal disclaimer as a condition of granting an untimely petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment.

continued examination (RCE), fee and submission under 37 C.F.R. §1.114. Further, the Examiner set a reply period of one month, not less than 30 days, and explicitly stated that extensions of time under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) were not available.

The application went abandoned by operation of law after midnight 9 July, 2008.

On 1 August, 2008, the Office mailed a Notice of Abandonment.

On 5 August, 2008, Petitioner filed an amendment with a copy of an electronic acknowledgement reflecting a 16 June, 2008, filing of papers that otherwise do not appear in the image file wrapper (IFW)—stated another way, the IFW does not appear at this writing to contain a copy of papers filed on 16 June, 2006—however, a fee transaction in the PALM database for the instant application indicates a credit card payment of \$210.00.

On 27 August, 2008, Petitioner filed the instant petition, however, his one- (1-) paragraph petition insufficiently details (*see*: MPEP §711.03(c)) the events/transactions Petitioner believes took place and some of the papers to which Petitioner refers in his petition do not appear to have been submitted with the petition. It would appear that Petitioner failed to file a timely and proper reply under the rules as discussed hereinabove. However, the matter is clouded by the absence of sufficient documentation, as also discussed above.

Thus, at this writing the record is not sufficient to support a grant of the instant petition.

Alternatively, Petitioner may file a petition to revive under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) with fee, proper reply (e.g. RCE, fee and submission under 37 C.F.R. §1.114) and make the statement of unintentional delay.

Out of an abundance of caution, Petitioners always are reminded that the filing of a petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 does not toll any periods that may be running any action by the Office and a petition seeking relief under the regulation must be filed within two (2) months of the act complained of (*see*: 37 C.F.R. §1.181(f)), and that those registered to practice and all others who make representations before the Office are reminded to inquire into the underlying facts of representations made to the Office and support averments with the appropriate documentation—since all owe to the Office the continuing duty to disclose.²

The availability of applications and application papers online to applicants/practitioners who diligently associate their Customer Number with the respective application(s) now provides an applicant/practitioner on-demand information as to events/transactions in an application.

² See supplement of 17 June, 1999. The Patent and Trademark Office is relying on Petitioner's duty of candor and good faith and accepting a statement made by Petitioner. See *Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure*, 62 *Fed. Reg.* at 53160 and 53178, 1203 *Off. Gaz. Pat. Office* at 88 and 103 (responses to comments 64 and 109)(applicant obligated under 37 C.F.R. §10.18 to inquire into the underlying facts and circumstances when providing statements to the Patent and Trademark Office).

STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Congress has authorized the Commissioner to "revive an application if the delay is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to have been "unavoidable." 35 U.S.C. §133 (1994).³

The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) and (b) set forth the requirements for a petitioner to revive a previously unavoidably or unintentionally, respectively, abandoned application under this congressional grant of authority. The language of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) is clear, unambiguous, and without qualification: the delay in tendering the reply to the outstanding Office action, as well as filing the first petition seeking revival, must have been unavoidable for the reply now to be accepted on petition.⁴ Delays in responding properly raise the question whether delays are unavoidable.⁴ Where there is a question whether the delay was unavoidable, Petitioners must meet the burden of establishing that the delay was unavoidable within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a).⁵ And the Petitioner must be diligent in attending to the matter.⁶ Failure to do so does not constitute the care required under Pratt, and so cannot satisfy the test for diligence and due care.

(By contrast, unintentional delays are those that do not satisfy the very strict statutory and regulatory requirements of unavoidable delay, and also, by definition, are not intentional.⁷))

Allegations as to the Request to Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment

The courts have determined the construct for properly supporting a petition seeking withdrawal of a holding of abandonment.⁸ (See, also, the commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(I)(A) and (B).) And the regulation requires that relief be sought within two (2) months of the act complained of:

Petitioner failed to make the showing required.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, The petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 is dismissed.

³ 35 U.S.C. §133 provides:

35 U.S.C. §133 Time for prosecuting application.

Upon failure of the applicant to prosecute the application within six months after any action therein, of which notice has been given or mailed to the applicant, or within such shorter time, not less than thirty days, as fixed by the Commissioner in such action, the application shall be regarded as abandoned by the parties thereto, unless it be shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that such delay was unavoidable.

⁴ See: *Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure; Final Rule Notice*, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53158-59 (October 10, 1997), 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 86-87 (October 21, 1997).

⁵ See: *In re Application of G*, 11 USPQ2d 1378, 1380 (Comm'r Pats. 1989).

⁶ See: *Diligence in Filing Petitions to Revive and Petitions to Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment*, 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 33 (March 19, 1991). It was and is Petitioner's burden to exercise diligence in seeking either to have the holding of abandonment withdrawn or the application revived. See 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office *supra*.

⁷ Therefore, by example, an unintentional delay in the reply might occur if the reply and transmittal form are to be prepared for shipment by the US Postal Service, but other pressing matters distract one's attention and the mail is not timely deposited for shipment.

⁸ See: *Delgar v. Schulyer*, 172 USPQ 513 (D.D.C. 1971).

ALTERNATIVE VENUE

Should Petitioner wish to revive the application, Petitioner may wish to properly file a petition to the Commissioner requesting revival of an application abandoned due to unavoidable delay or unintentional delay under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) or (b), respectively,. (See: http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/mpep/documents/0700_711_03_c.htm#sect711.03c)

A petition to revive on the grounds of unintentional delay must be filed promptly and such petition must be accompanied by the reply, the petition fee, a terminal disclaimer and fee where appropriate and a statement that "the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition was unintentional." (The statement is in the form available online.)

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

By Mail: Mail Stop PETITION
 Commissioner for Patents
 P. O. Box 1450
 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

By hand: U. S. Patent and Trademark Office
 Customer Service Window, Mail Stop Petitions
 Randolph Building
 401 Dulany Street
 Alexandria, VA 22314

By facsimile: **(571) 273-8300**
 Attn: Office of Petitions

While telephone inquiries regarding this decision may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3214, it is noted that all practice before the Office is in writing (see: 37 C.F.R. §1.2⁹) and the proper authority for action on any matter in this regard are the statutes (35 U.S.C.), regulations (37 C.F.R.) and the commentary on policy (MPEP). Therefore, no telephone discussion may be controlling or considered authority for Petitioner's action(s).



/John J. Gillon, Jr./
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Senior Attorney
Office of Petitions

⁹ The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.2 provide:

§1.2 Business to be transacted in writing.

All business with the Patent and Trademark Office should be transacted in writing. The personal attendance of applicants or their attorneys or agents at the Patent and Trademark Office is unnecessary. The action of the Patent and Trademark Office will be based exclusively on the written record in the Office. No attention will be paid to any alleged oral promise, stipulation, or understanding in relation to which there is disagreement or doubt.